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LIGHT THE LIGHTS

'

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

LESS NONSENSE  
A BETTER SKY  
BRING BACK THE BELLS  
'WELL, ANYHOW . . .' OR, LITTLE TALKS  
LET US BE GLUM  
SIREN SONG  
GENERAL CARGO  
SIP! SWALLOW!  
THE 'AYES' HAVE IT  
MILD AND BITTER  
WHAT A WORD!  
HOLY DEADLOCK  
THE WATER GIPSIES  
UNCOMMON LAW  
MISLEADING CASES IN THE COMMON LAW  
MORE MISLEADING CASES  
STILL MORE MISLEADING CASES  
MR. FEWTER  
'NO BOATS ON THE RIVER'  
HONEYBUBBLE & CO.  
THE SECRET BATTLE  
THE HOUSE BY THE RIVER  
THE OLD FLAME  
TANTIVY TOWERS  
DERBY DAY  
HELEN  
THE BOMBER GIPSY, AND OTHER POEMS  
THE WHEREFORE AND THE WHY  
'TINKER, TAILOR . . .'  
WISDOM FOR THE WISE  
TOPSY, M.P.  
THE TRIALS OF TOPSY  
LAUGHING ANN  
SHE-SHANTIES  
PLAIN JANE  
BALLADS FOR BROADBROWS



# LIGHT THE LIGHTS

*by*

A. P. HERBERT

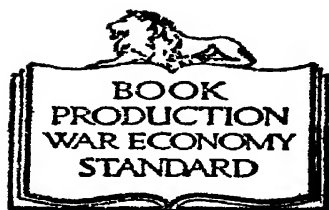


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TO  
OUR FINEST  
MAN

*First published in 1945*



THIS BOOK IS PRODUCED IN  
COMPLETE CONFORMITY WITH THE  
AUTHORIZED ECONOMY STANDARDS

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

All these pieces except two appeared in the *Sunday Graphic*. 'The Ballad of the "Bluebell"' and 'Battle of the Headlines' were first printed by *Punch*. My thanks to the proprietors of both papers.

A. P. H.

## GO SLOW

Go slow, you raving ass, go slow,  
And do not cut your corners so;  
For there's a citizen ahead  
Who will not help the nation, dead.  
It is a nuisance, I allow,  
That he should think of crossing now;  
But he is late, as well as you,  
And thinks he is important, too.  
He is not, I would have you note,  
An antelope or mountain goat;  
He has not, as I think you may,  
Some sixty horses tucked away;  
He cannot spring into the sky  
To let your motor-car go by.  
And do not hastily complain  
That he is silly or insane.  
He may be old, or have the gout;  
Perhaps his torch has given out;  
He may have lost a limb or two  
From fighting over there—for you;  
He may be deaf; it may be he  
Who brought your petrol oversea.  
At all events, for all you know,  
A man is there—and so, go slow.  
It's not his fault that you are late;  
And anyhow the girl can wait.  
More citizens are killed at home  
Than soldiers on the road to Rome.

*January 9, 1944*

## THE FOUR EQUALITIES

'An equal Opportunity for all'!  
All right: but the advantage will be small  
Unless, as well, the citizen can find  
Equality of Character and Mind;  
And, sad to say, in almost every trade  
Equality of Beauty is an aid.  
I know the names of many a likely lad  
Who'd all the chances Mr. Churchill had:  
They had the birth, the schooling, all the lot,  
But he's Prime Minister, and they are not.  
Two Oxford girls may be alike in brain;  
But one is beautiful, the other plain;  
And on the stage, though both of them go far,  
One is a stooge, the other is a star.  
And so, dear comrades, when the war is done  
Let's fight for Four Equalities, not one.

*January 16, 1944*

## THE TOWER OF BABBLE

Some one in Cairo—Cairo, if you please!—  
Reports that Britain is arranging Peace.  
There's been a meeting in the Pyrenees!  
(The tale's from Yugoslavia and Greece.)

Then Moscow spreads it, very wide and well:  
It's heard in Maine, and on Miami Beach.  
Was it in vain the Tower of Babel fell?  
Is it for this that we defend Free Speech?

*January 23, 1944*

## 'HE'S BACK'

He is back. And somehow the sky is brighter;  
Somehow the seas are not so high;  
The steps of the marching men are lighter—  
And only the dull folk whisper 'Why?'

I know—'We were never a one-man people.'  
'The sower's nothing without the sod.'  
'The church is the thing, and not the steeple.'  
Nevertheless—he is back. Thank God.

*January 23, 1944*

## THIS IS BUSHIDO

This is Bushido. These are they  
Who show the West a nobler way.  
Do you remember, long ago,  
When earthquakes crumpled Tokyo?  
We passed the plate, we filled our caps  
With hard-won pennies for the Japs.

This is Bushido. This is how  
Our children are rewarded now.  
When God again afflicts Japan  
Let her not look to mortal man;  
And God bless those who mean to make  
The whole of that vile island quake.

*January 30, 1944*

## THANK YOU

*(To the N.F.S.)*

Thank you, fire-fighters, harnessing your hoses,  
Busy at your pumps, or patiently at play:  
Once upon a time we used to throw you roses;  
You don't see quite such a cloud of them to-day.

Some of us remember the blitz and the burning,  
The black-faced boys in the red and blue.  
St. Paul's in peril, and the Hun returning,  
The tanks all dry and the night half through.

When they sound the sirens, some of us are sleeping,  
Some of us turn over, some of us complain:  
But you are on the job still, we are in your keeping,  
And one fine night we'll be glad of you again.\*

*January 30, 1944*

## THE PERFECT CITIZEN

O perfect citizen (if you exist),  
Who never make the errors that you might,  
Neither complacent nor a pessimist,  
Not apathetic either—but just right;

Who do not squander yet decline to hoard;  
Whom Charity need never pester twice;  
Whose modest savings, all the same, have soared;  
Whose respirator is not full of mice;

\* We were—next month.

Whose torch is not too bright or held too high;  
Who do not drop tram tickets in the street;  
And if you saw Montgomery pass by  
Would think it not a matter to repeat;

Who would not buy a turkey if you could;  
And pay your Income Tax with quiet joy;  
And think the Government is rather good—  
Sir, we salute you. Keep it up, old boy.

*February 6, 1944*

## THE BATTLE OF THE HEADLINES

Hold back, sub-editor! You march and plan  
So much more swiftly than the soldiers can.  
They take a trench or two, a few-score scalps,  
But your white arrows are across the Alps.  
Even a tank must sometimes pause for fuel,  
But you fly onward, twice as quick and cruel.  
I know it's easy to imagine 'traps'  
And super-Stalingrads on small-scale maps.  
What is a river, or a mountain-crag?  
They are not marked. So Fritz is 'in the bag'.  
In the Crimea—do the Germans know?—  
They 'faced annihilation' long ago.  
I can't recall when you announced the kill;  
I know they face annihilation still.  
If all the Huns had met a horrid end  
That you've 'enveloped' in the Dnieper Bend,  
Or pronged at Tarnopol or Krivoi Rog,  
Or caught with pincers in the Pripet bog,  
We might stop talking of the Second Front—  
There would not be another Hun to hunt.



Desist, headliner, from your wild advance,  
And let the front-line fellow have a chance.  
Lay off, brave scribe; for, when he does prevail,  
We hardly notice it—the news is stale.

*February 9, 1944*

## BERLIN

*(To a Bishop)*

I do not 'gloat'. But when I see  
What they have done to all mankind,  
Whatever you may think of me,  
I manage not to mind.

*February 13, 1944*

## THANK YOU

*(To the Metropolitan Police)*

Thank you, policeman. What would London do  
Without her guides, and guardians, in blue?  
You keep the peace, your temper, and your wits,  
A dear by day, a bulwark in the blitz.  
Half-way between a mother and a god,  
You rule the roaring traffic with a nod:  
But still have time and patience to explain  
The way to Number Ninety, Lambeth Lane.  
What lawyer could recite, has even read,  
The million regulations in your head—  
The rules of roads, the black-out and the bars,  
The rights of criminals, the wrongs of cars?

More than us all, you show the British way,  
Strength without shouting, drill without display.  
Pinned to your post, and longing to be gone  
In different uniform, you carry on.

*February 13, 1944*

‘C.D.’

Thank you, soldiers of the street,  
Never budging, never beat,  
You who steer, so fierce and fast,  
Ambulances through the blast,  
You with stretchers, you with cranes,  
Tireless in the grim remains.  
Heroes while the blitz is on,  
Less considered when it's gone  
You have waited year by year,  
Done your job, and let them jeer.  
Now, the story shows you right:  
You were ready ‘on the night’.  
Not so young, and under-manned,  
Faithful in the breach you stand.  
Never budging, never beat,  
Thank you, soldiers of the street.

*February 27, 1944*

WOMAN POWER

They took the maid; they took the cook as well:  
Mamma said ‘Splendid! Give the Germans ——!’  
The two small daughters did the housework now;  
And that was good for them, we must allow.

Then Maud and May went off, in uniform,  
And left Mamma the orphan of the storm.  
They put on weight; they looked extremely fit,  
And did their very best to do their bit.  
Meanwhile, Mamma took on the work of four;  
She fed her husband, and she scrubbed the floor,  
She dug for victory, she queued and shopped;  
She drove an ambulance until she dropped.  
But there's a time, however big the Cause,  
When even British matrons have to pause:  
Mamma is not the girl she was before,  
Gave up the ambulance, and digs no more.  
Well, all must share in total sacrifice;  
And Maud and May look very fine and nice.  
It is immensely comforting to feel  
The total force of England at the wheel.  
But one small cloud is in the picture too—  
Poor Maud and May have nothing much to do.

Must we, to use a rather plainer tongue,  
Kill off the old 'uns, and brown off the young?

*March 5, 1944*

## R-US-AF

Like Sun and Moon, they share the sky  
But courteously divide the day;  
No matter what the clocks may cry  
Be sure that one is on the way:  
And when the two together ride,  
No matter where the wicked hide,  
How high, how terrible the tide!

*March 12, 1944*

## THE MYSTERY

*(Another silly contribution to a silly controversy)*

I seldom hear a thoughtful Briton speak  
But he will start complaining of the State:  
‘The State is brutal, and the State is weak’,  
‘The State is daft, the State is out of date’;  
‘The State is mean, the State is anti-joy’,  
‘The State is inefficient and unfair’;  
‘The State behaves to chaps in its employ  
As private firms would not desire—or dare’.  
Yet England longs, the same wise people sing,  
To see the State run every blessed thing.

*March 12, 1944*

## BADOGLIOVSKI

The war, though we dislike it quite a bit,  
Is sometimes laughable, you must admit.

O Lord, the lectures we have had to bear  
From all the red-hot scribes who ‘really know’—  
O Lord, how cross the bilious weeklies were  
About our ‘flirting’ with Badoglio!

It showed that Mr. Churchill was insane;  
It showed that Eisenhower was a Hun.  
It showed that principle was down the drain;  
It showed that dirty work was being done.

No honest man could use the fellow long:  
A single handshake was a deep disgrace.  
And now great Russia (who can do no wrong)  
Sails in and wraps him in a warm embrace!

The war, though not a masterpiece of wit,  
Is sometimes laughable, you must admit.

*March 19, 1944*

### TO A BOMBER

Heed not the sighs and sermons,  
Go, gallant lads, again.  
Let some folk think of Germans—  
We think of Pole and Dane.

*March 19, 1944*

### 'SALUTE THE SOLDIER'

Hail, soldier, huddled in the rain,  
Hail, soldier, squelching through the mud,  
Hail, soldier, sick of dirt and pain,  
The sight of death, the smell of blood.

New men, new weapons, bear the brunt;  
New slogans gild the ancient game:  
The infantry are still in front,  
And mud and dust are much the same.

Hail, humble footman, poised to fly  
Across the West, or any, Wall!  
Proud, plodding, peerless P.B.I.—  
The foulest, finest job of all.

*March 26, 1944*

## THE BIG PARADE

Boadicea from the Bridge looked down,  
And saw the Yankee tanks invade the town.  
Boadicea held her head more high  
To hail the Sherman and the proud G.I.  
'Eyes right!' she said. 'Fine fellows though you are,  
You're not the first to drive an armoured car.  
Halt, soldiers, halt! For here is one can tell  
A tale of fighting chariots as well.  
Look up, brave girls. In A.D. 61  
I led the lads, and saw the Roman run.  
God speed you too against an alien mob:  
God bless you all for joining in the job.  
By Grant! By Sherman!' said the queen of queens.  
I wish I'd had such men, and such machines.'

They passed. And Parliament, across the way,  
Discussed the principle of equal pay.

*April 2, 1944*

## THE TRAVELLERS

Soldier, are you afraid of the things to come?  
Do you dream of the dawn—and the cold sea's heave—  
And the guns' blaze and the bullets' hum—  
Do you dream and tremble, and grieve?'

'I dunno, Mum,  
It can't be much worse, Mum,  
Than standing packed in a corridor, Mum,  
Seven hours, Mum—  
Coming back from leave.'

*April 9, 1944*

OH, NO, JOHN . . .

(*The Budget*)

We sweat and strive, we scrape and save,  
To gather bullets for the brave.  
We earn a pound; but in the end  
Ten shillings is the sum we spend.  
We go about in tattered coats,  
Because the nation needs our notes.  
The fruits of art, research, and skill,  
The scholar's book, the poet's quill,  
The old man's pipe, the widow's cheese—  
The Chancellor spares none of these:  
And every time you wet your lips  
You float a brace of battleships.  
All this we cheerfully forgive  
That England—and the World—may live.  
But if I put a reckless pound  
On some one's else's horse or hound  
(Not surely, quite the thing to do  
When careless spending is taboo?),  
On such transactions, great or small,  
I do not pay a tax at all—  
Not even if the creature wins!  
They tax our virtues, not our sins.  
Do we forgive this? We do not:  
Because, Sir John, it's rather rot.

*April 16, 1944*

## ST. GEORGE

The dragon to his cave retires,  
And all the world awaits the kill:  
But we can feel the angry fires,  
And hear the captives crying still.

By bench and bomb, machine and mine,  
In all the fleets that feed the fray,  
On all the roads across the Rhine,  
Ride in our hearts, Saint George, to-day.  
*April 23, 1944*

## HITLER'S BIRTHDAY

*(To music)*

There'll always be a Hitler  
Beside the silver Spree  
If Germans are such silly sheep  
As Germans seem to be:  
There'll always be a Hitler  
To worry you and me  
Until we take the German race  
And dump it in the sea.

*April 23, 1944*

## MAY 3

*(For the Polish National Day)*

The third of May! the third of May!  
Hang out the Polish flag to-day;  
As loyal Poles have grimly done  
Since A.D. 1791.



The day they fashioned, all alone,  
A Constitution of their own;  
The day they threatened to be free  
(Which was not quite the thing to be);  
To give a voice to common men—  
And that was not the fashion then.  
Great Catherine (excuse a grin)  
Described the Poles as 'Jacobin':  
And bully States, on either hand,  
Destroyed the laws and stole the land.

The third of May! The third of May!  
And still the Poles may not be gay.  
They fought the Prince of Bullies first:  
But Fate, so far, rewards them worst.  
Four times dismembered—never done;  
Four times divided—always one;  
Ungentle giants all about—  
No kindly sea to keep them out.  
But still, whatever tyrant reign,  
The Poles resist, rebel, remain.  
They lose their cities, not their souls,  
The proud, unconquerable Poles:  
And may the nations have the nerve  
To bless the brave as they deserve!

*April 30, 1944*

## A 'GOOD' BUDGET

Thank you, Sir John; though it's a little strange  
To thank the torturer who makes no change.  
Thank you, Sir John, you've been extremely nice:  
Whisky is still five times the proper price.

'Thank you, Sir John'; the compliments resound:  
You still take only ten bob in the pound.  
'Thank you, Sir John', the cheerful victim brays.  
Never did robbery receive such praise.

*May 7, 1944*

W.L.A.

*(After an old song)*

Salute the ladies of the land  
Who fight with spade and plough,  
The girls who keep the tractors manned,  
And conquer bull or cow!  
Salute the soldiers of the soil  
Who joined the Big Parade  
For to plough and sow, to reap and hoe,  
And to be a farmer's maid.

*May 7, 1944*

'H.G.'

Four years! And still you do not shirk  
The weary round of watch and work.  
Four years! And still from bank or bench  
You run to Tommy-gun and trench.  
Four years! And still, when others pause,  
You give your Sundays to the Cause.  
To-day you wait the final fray;  
We wish you 'No returns' to-day:  
But may the spirit, may the flame,  
Live on for ever, with your fame—  
The greatest army mustered yet  
That never asked what it would get.

*May 14, 1944*

## ANY ENGLISHMAN TO HIS SON

My lad, I like America a lot,  
And she can give us much we haven't got.  
By all means speak like some Chicago tough  
If England's English is not clear enough.  
By all means sing the songs of Hollywood  
If 'Annie Laurie' is no longer good.  
But two small things I must impress on you:  
Pray do not jitterbug—AND DO NOT CHEW!

*May 14, 1944*

## THE UNLUCKY DIP

Yes, yes, my boy, by all means train for war.  
Do knots and splices, morse and semaphore;  
And learn to drill, and how to use a gun,  
To sail the ocean, and destroy the Hun—  
Study the stars, the secrets of the sky,  
And fix your dreams upon the day you fly.  
And then, when you're proficient, keen and fit,  
We'll raffle you and put you down a pit.  
Science prevails. The more that we advance,  
The fewer things we like to leave to chance.  
See how the racehorse, from the age of two,  
Is fashioned for the job he has to do:  
We do not train the falcon or the hound  
And then decide to send them underground.  
But when we want our boys to give their best  
We use a hat—and Fortune does the rest.

*May 21, 1944*

## WRONG NAME

Let's have less talk of 'Nazi' tank  
And 'Nazi' aeroplane.  
It is the GERMANS we must thank  
For blood and sweat and pain.  
And on that fact let us be frank  
And very, very plain.

*May 21, 1944*

## THE WONDER

It is a wonder, this tough, tiny isle,  
With such a load of metal and of men,  
That she can sleep, that she can sleep and smile,  
While half the planet twitters 'Where?' and 'When?'

This is the hardest task that man has tried;  
This is the strangest voyage since the Ark:  
But this is England, empress of the tide,  
And, calm and cool, she sails into the dark.

*May 28, 1944*

## FRANCE

*(‘France is gone’—Smuts)*

‘Gone?’ France? As well put out the stars,  
Or take the ruddy heart from Mars!  
And Frenchmen, fighting now for Rome,  
Cry ‘Gone, maybe. But going home.’

*May 28, 1944*

## THE BRITISH CHEST

'The chest is empty' say the sad.  
Well, yes, we've given all we had.  
But British breed, and brawn, and brain  
Can fill that noble void again,  
As long as no man stops to see  
How much *his* dividend will be.

The race that put dictators down  
Will not be stuck for half a crown;  
The race that routed tough and tank  
Can win a balance at the bank;  
And, after all, the British chest  
When things look bad expands the best.

*June 5, 1944*

## THE WHITE STAR

There was no waving. Nobody made a sound.  
Ship after ship, with never a cheer or song.  
Only the White Star whispered where they were bound,  
Only the pilot-flags fluttered: 'It won't be long'.

There was no waving. Suddenly they were gone.  
Huddled on deck, they quietly slipped to sea.  
They looked down dumbly, trying their life-belts on,  
And we saluted the White Star—sign of the free.

The ships came back—and there was no waving then.  
It is too soon, they said, for the song and dance:  
But we saluted the ships and the silent men  
Who took the White Star over the sea to France.

*June 11, 1944*

## 'SOME TALK OF ALEXANDER'

However big the battles nearer home,  
Let us remember—we have captured Rome.

*June 11, 1944*

## TO A HORSE

*(Derby Day)*

The curtain rises on the crowded stage—  
The grimmest play produced by any age.  
We have invaded France—and captured Rome;  
Winged, wicked weapons race towards our home.  
We move on tiptoe up the final slope,  
Intense with toil, anxiety and hope,  
Our cause humanity, our foe brute force—  
And yet to-day we idolize a horse.  
To-day, wherever Englishmen are found,  
One Suffolk mile or so is sacred ground;  
To-day the Holy City knows your name,  
And I dare say that Bayeux does the same.  
To-day all Britons are a band of brothers,  
Knowing that you run faster than the others.  
This is a mystery, as all agree;  
Yet, noble horse, it does not worry me.  
Here is the secret weapon of the land;  
Here is a thing no Hun can understand.

*June 18, 1944*

## WHAT A PLAN!

Honour the brave. But see some praise remains  
For such a large expenditure of brains.

*June 18, 1944*

## RETORT COURTEOUS

(VI)

No pilots? Do they back out?  
All right; we'll have no black-out.

*June 18, 1944*

## 'NICE KIND GERMANS'

When Rome, and Rommel, disappoint the foe  
The Nice Kind German is again on show.  
On go the sheep-skins, and the wolves protest  
Milk is their diet and they love us best;  
While flabby folk compassionately view  
A fellow-being just the same as you.

But when the random death patrols the sky,  
When 'London burns' and 'Victory is nigh',  
The Nice Kind German rollicks with the rest  
And gloating hate commands the lamb-like breast.  
Here's no surprise—and nothing for regret:  
There was a danger that we might forget.

*June 25, 1944*

## 'FLAMING JUNE'

June, gentle June, of whom the crooners croon,  
Sweet month of silk, of salmon, and the swoon;  
June, what a chance you had—to be your best,  
The fighting friend of Freedom in the West!  
You could have said 'I'll give them placid seas,  
Permitting nothing but an off-shore breeze;

Blue days for bombers on the Calais beat,  
And not a cloud below three thousand feet;  
Comfort for soldiers—safety for the tar:  
May has her medals—June shall wear a Star!

Instead, sweet June, how sadly you have sinned!  
Henceforth, you little slut, your name is Wind,  
Hail, Gale or Thunder, Cold or Cloud, or Sleet.  
June, you're a quisling; June, you are a cheat.  
If there is any trick you've left undone  
That helps the enemy, pray tell me one?  
And yet, in spite of your obscene display,  
Oh, what a month—a winner all the way!  
This is the song that History will croon:  
'How we Defied the Traitor, General June!'

*July 2, 1944*

## HOW PROUD . . . !

*(To the Luftwaffe)*

How proud you must be, boys, you who were Lords of  
the Air,  
Playing with fireworks, deep in a concrete cave.  
Pressing a button and killing you know not where,  
You who were going to teach us the ways of the  
brave!

How proud you must be, boys, hearing the soldiers cry  
'Come to our aid, Luftwaffe!' How proud you  
must be,  
Answering 'Soldier, we have no time to fly:  
We are shooting from holes at hospitals over the sea.'



How proud you will be, boys, hearing the children say  
‘How did you march against England? Tell us the  
tale.’

‘I hid in a hole, child, many a mile away.

Aiming at Portsmouth and hitting the Maida Vale.’

*July 9, 1944*

## NOT A WORD!

*(or Unconditional Surrender)*

Why should we tell the Hun  
What happens when we've won?  
You do not tell the snake  
What form his death will take,  
Or courteously explain  
That he will feel no pain  
(Unless you're so polite  
You'd *like* another bite,  
Or think that you can make  
Hard bargains with a snake).  
You hit him on the head  
Until the reptile's dead.  
When we are sure of that  
It will be time to chat.

*July 16, 1944*

## CONSOLATION

*(For V1)*

You sighed: ‘If I were younger I would go  
And share the perils of the fighting man.  
I long to face the fury of the foe’;  
Well, now you can.

*July 16, 1944*

## ‘PUT THAT LIGHT OUT’

Germany, your name is Night,  
Darkening every coast and clime:  
Even when you show a light  
It is filthy, it's a crime.

As our punctual blinds come down  
And the doodle shows his claws,  
This is what annoys the town—  
You can break the black-out laws.

*July 23, 1944*

## THE SOLUTION

Kill Hitler? Why? A Himmler takes his place.  
There'll be no rest till you destroy the race.  
Besides, he'd be a hero if he died.  
The thing is simple. Have him 'certified'.

*July 23, 1944*

## MODEL PRAYER FOR MODEL CITIZEN

Stop, noise, immediately, that I,  
And not some other chap may die!

*July 23, 1944*

## ONE FRONT

‘Americans advance—the British not——’  
‘We don't do much—the Russians do a lot.’  
Such talk, my little lad, should be taboo:  
Nor would it help us much if it were true.

When there is more than one St. George about,  
Who knows—who cares—which puts the Dragon  
out?

Now one, and now the other, bears the brunt:  
But all are fighters on the Single Front.

*July 30, 1944*

## THE W . . . . R

I think I mentioned June the other week:  
About July I simply cannot speak.

*July 30, 1944*

## ROCKET RESULTS

So here's another of your wicked wiles—  
A rocket which can whizz four hundred miles?  
Do not suppose, if it could travel ten,  
That it would save your bacon, silly men.  
But if the ancient ways of war must cease,  
We'll have to take new thought about the peace.  
The Atlantic Charter did not, I believe,  
Provide for folk with rockets up their sleeve.  
Be careful, Fritz. The farther you can throw  
The farther into Europe we must go;  
And then, that it may not occur again,  
The farther—and the fiercer—we'll remain.  
Maybe, to pen the Prussian fireworks in,  
We now shall need a bridgehead in Berlin.

*August 6, 1944*

## BUSINESS IN ARMS

It was not righteousness, it was not luck  
That made the Fort, the Sherman and the Duck,  
Or launched the Liberties and L.S.T.'s  
To take St. George across the narrow seas.

And when we modestly proclaim our might  
Let us be glad Big Business joined the fight,  
And sing for ever on the Day of Thanks  
The vast inventive genius of the Yanks.

*August 13, 1944*

## COEUR DE LION

I have been in France. There are some poplars still,  
And Norman spires unwounded on the hill:  
I saw the slaughtered cities but I saw  
The flags of freedom, and the lamps of law.  
I saw Montgomery, tremendous man,  
Loosing the lightning from a caravan,  
Crusading calmly in his corduroys,  
The coolest thunderbolt the King employs.  
I saw his weary soldiers, in the dust,  
Salute with love, and not because they must:  
For he has won the battle of belief,  
And Cockneys are Crusaders, like 'the Chief'.  
I saw the beaches, and, with humble feet,  
Walked in the wake of the Crusaders' Fleet:  
I saw the ships, a never-ending chain,  
That makes the Channel English once again.  
And I remembered—five short years before  
Some German said that England was no more.

*August 20, 1944*

## THE HALF-COCKERS

The more we see of this gigantic job,  
The more we know how much there was to do,  
The less we think of that impatient mob  
Who wished it done in 1942.

*August 20, 1944*

## PARIS REGAINED

The filthy guest has gone? You'll need a wash:  
But London will not wait to kiss your hand.  
We have the bombing. But you had the Boche—  
And we know which is easier to stand.

*August 27, 1944*

## EPITAPH

*(For a Young Man of the Maquis)*

They said that France was dead.  
You see they lied.  
I could not hear it said—  
And so I died.

*August 27, 1944*

## THE BUZZ BOMB BOYS

Fire away, Fritz,  
But look over your shoulder:  
Fire away, Fritz,  
For you won't grow much older.  
Blow us to bits,

But your feet will be colder.  
Down in those pits  
Your carcass will moulder.  
Fire away, Fritz,  
But look over your shoulder.

*August 27, 1944*

### MONTGOMERY

Field Marshal, few, and foolish, are the lands  
That do not hail the baton in your hands.  
They labelled you a 'showman'. But we know  
Good showmen must have something good to show:  
One does not capture by the showman's art  
The people's confidence, the soldier's heart.  
They said you were 'eccentric'. We could do  
With several abnormalities like you:  
It needs a not quite ordinary man  
To start at Alamein and take Sedan.  
Master of craft, and horror of the Huns,  
One hundred salvos from a thousand guns!

*September 3, 1944*

### BUNS FOR THE HUNS

I see it coming—the Fund to feed the Huns:  
We shall go short of bread to give them buns.  
No, thank you, boys. We cannot do too much  
For French or Dane, the Belgians or the Dutch:  
But did we store the honey in our hive  
To keep the killing Herrenvolk alive?  
And did our sailors brave the U-boats then  
To fill a larder for the S.S. men?  
To all such questions—I've a guess to give—  
The answer is in the affirmative.

*September 3, 1944*

## WAR—AND PEACE

'We can take it'—not a doubt.  
We can give it—we can win it.  
But, with softies all about,  
Can we rub their noses in it?

*September 3, 1944*

## THE BALLAD OF THE 'BLUEBELL'

*(With respectful reference to the admirable exploit of Petty  
Officer Alan Baker, of L.B.V.37)*

The *Bluebell* was a lighter, a dumb barge, a box,  
For to lighten the ships in the stream and the docks;  
But she weren't very big, and she weren't very new,  
And she lay on the barge-roads with nothing to do.

Now, the lighters of London, they've names like a yacht,  
Such as *Blossom*, and *Zephyr*, and *Pilgrim*, and *Grot*;  
But their bottoms is flat, and, between you and me,  
They was never intended to travel by sea.

But they took them old lighters, a thousand or more;  
They cut out the ends and they put in a door;  
They gave 'em a wheel, and a motor so fine,  
And painted 'em camyflarge like a ship of the line.

Bill Fox was a lighterman, Bermondsey born,  
A Freeman of the River, and twenty years sworn.  
He could work a big lighter like a little canoe,  
And all what's to know of the River he knew.

You should see him a-drive—or, as you would say,  
drift—

With a mighty great sweep that you can't hardly lift,  
A-hitting the bridge-holes as nice as you please,  
And making it look like a lifetime of ease.

All alone in his craft, with the wind right ahead,  
A bit late on his tide, he'll drive on till he's dead.  
For this is the oath all the lightermen swear:  
'I'll never lay down till I get the craft *there*.'

He knew every eddy from Vauxhall to Grays,  
And the set of the tide, and the craft and their ways,  
And the buoys and the lights from Barn Elms to the  
sea;  
But he didn't know more of the compass than me.

Now one day they says: 'Come, you lightermen all;  
We're going for to crack this here Hitler's West Wall:  
But the Navy can't do without lightermen like you!'  
And the lightermen of London they done what was  
due.

They come up from Tilbury, they come down from  
Kew,  
From the Prospect of Whitby, and the Dog and Duck  
too,  
From Gallions, from Bugsby's, from Bow Creek and all,  
For to help the Royal Navy crack up the West Wall.

They made Bill a petty officer, with a peak to his hat;  
They taught him some drill, and the compass, and  
that;  
They gave him two stokers, two seamen, A.B.,  
And there he is, captain of a Landing Barge (V).



Well, according to orders the *Bluebell* sets sail;  
It's rough, and it's blowing a bit of a gale;  
They lose the old convoy, the engine breaks down—  
And there she lays rolling like a lord-about-town.

The stokers they struggle but can't get things clear;  
When up comes a corvette and says: 'What's all this  
here?

You're out of the battle, but don't you despair,  
For I'm bound for U.K. and I'll tow you back there.'

'Why, thank you,' says Bill, 'but that's no use to me;  
For I've got to deliver these vehicles, you see;  
I'm a lighterman of London, and I beg to declare  
I never lay down till I've got the craft *there*.'

Then Bill to his crew he says: 'Boys, are you game  
To take these here vehicles across just the same?'  
'Aye, aye,' says the stokers, 'we've only one care,  
Which is, how we proceeds—and, for that matter,  
where?'

Says Bill: 'They're so keen on "Security" now,  
They didn't say where we was bound, I allow;  
But I fancy it's France, and, the wind being fair,  
Well, what I suggest, we proceeds over there.

'And as to the first point, we've got the two sweeps,  
And we've got the tarpaulin what covers the jeeps:  
I'd *row* the ship over if it weren't for the gale,  
But we'll rig the tarpaulin and see if she'll sail!'

Well, that's what they done. It weren't easy, of course;  
For that old tarpaulin she pulls like a horse;  
But they hit the right part of the coast, which was  
queer,  
And Bill says the Americans stood him a beer.

They've left them old lighters on the Normandy shore;  
We won't see the *Bluebell* at Limehouse no more:  
But they're lightening the steamers, a job that they  
    know,  
And passing the mustard for Hitler and Co.

And Bill's back in civvies as right as the rain,  
A-driving his craft through the bridge-holes again:  
So let's take a pint, sir—no more than is due  
To the lighters of London—and the lightermen too.  
*September 6, 1944*

## SALUTE THE CIVILIAN

You thought you did not matter much,  
    But you have mattered more and more.  
He thought he fought a rabbit hutch,  
    And found a lion at the door.  
*September 10, 1944*

## NOTE FOR PEACE CONFERENCE

The French require a line  
    To meet the Prussian shock.  
We're very short of wine:  
    The French have quite a stock.  
So France should have the Rhine—  
    And we must have the Hock.  
*September 10, 1944*

## MYSTERY OF THE MIDDLE EAST

In all the history of Balkan bruisers!  
I think the Bulgar fascinates me most,  
Who simply can't refrain from backing losers,  
Not even when the winner's at the post.

*September 10, 1944*

### MORNING PAPER

*(A Belated Bouquet)*

Morning paper? Here you are!  
Morning papers everywhere—  
Bed or breakfast—tram or car.  
'Nothing in it.' But it's there.

Banging bombs and sweating men—  
Nights of terror in the Street:  
But they cannot stop the pen,  
And the printer can't be beat.

There is havoc in the town,  
And the telephone is dumb,  
Milkman's late—a bridge is down—  
But the morning paper's come.

Yes, they also serve the King,  
Though their medals may be rare.  
'Nothing in it?' 'Not a thing.'  
Yet be thankful it is there.

*September 17, 1944*

## LET US REMEMBER

We fought to mend his manners;  
We fought to save our souls:  
But what was on our banners?  
A promise to the Poles.

*September 17, 1944*

## A CHANGE

They used to laugh  
At the General Staff:  
What ass will bray  
At the Staff to-day?

*September 24, 1944*

## V7

'V 7' is a flying gramophone  
That fills the firmament with yells and screeches,  
And in a voice more hideous than his own  
Recites long passages from Hitler's speeches.

*September 24, 1944*

## V8

'V 8' is Goering, purring through the skies,  
Astride a doodle-bug of double girth,  
Bound for Old England with a load of lies,  
And beaming tenderly on all the earth.

*September 24, 1944*

## THE HARBOUR

We saw them come down the River, the comical,  
secret floats,

Weird shapes like a madman's playthings—and  
what could the monsters be?

Were they bridges, or docks, or jetties? Were they  
ferries, or forts, or boats?

We held our peace, and we wondered, and they  
quietly passed to sea.

But now I have seen the weird shapes made one in a  
work of art.

I have seen the incredible harbour the British have  
brought to birth:

The puzzle toy is complete now, each mad piece  
playing a part;

And this, I say, is a Wonder that never was  
matched on earth.

It was built in the open Channel, it was built on a  
hostile shore,

It was built in the filthy weather, it was built in a  
nasty blow:

But it lies as neat as a jig-saw set out on a nursery floor,  
And it feeds the conquering armies, wherever the  
armies go.

Give thanks for the wild inventors, give thanks for  
the fearless wits,

Who set themselves to a riddle that never was put  
before;

Give thanks for the faultless workers who ferried the  
crazy bits,

And fashioned a mighty harbour, in storm, on a  
hostile shore.

*October 1, 1944*

## EPITAPH

(*For Arnhem*)

From sky to earth for Liberty I fell.  
I fought. I won my wings again. Farewell.

*October 1, 1944*

## SAVE OUR SEASIDE

Moth in the sofa, mines upon the shore:  
The Skylark's leaking, and the Pier's no more.  
For four long years we've seen the 'seaside' bleed,  
And Southern 'fronts' were at the front indeed.  
Britannia, spare a penny for their pain:  
We'd like to be beside the sea again.

*October 8, 1944*

## BRIDGEHEADS FOR ALL

('The Russian People are entitled to safe frontiers.'—  
*The Prime Minister*)

But, sir, what line of land is 'safe' to-day  
With doodle-bugs and rockets on the way?  
And if the Russian frontier must advance,  
How about Belgium—not to mention France?

*October 8, 1944*

## SAMSON AACHENISTES

'Touch me who dares!' the German Samson said,  
'I will pull down all Europe on his head.'  
And, there's no doubt, the Germans, good or bad,  
Would still have hailed the hero if he had.  
But will he win much national renown  
By playing Samson in his own home-town?

*October 15, 1944*

## TO A PARROT

A 'vested interest' is—what?  
Show me an interest that's not.  
If I save sixpence in a chest  
That is a vested interest:  
You have, in your beloved wife,  
A vested interest for life.  
George has another in his cat—  
But we are none the worse for that.  
I beg you, do not use again  
Expressions you can not explain.

*October 15, 1944*

## THE WIMP

The blimp (if he exists) may say  
'This thing is new. Take it away.'  
But is the Wimp's a wiser song—  
'This thing is old. It must be wrong.'

*October 15, 1944*

## UNIONITIS

I'm half afraid to lift my lute  
And sing my song to-day:  
For I belong to the Institute  
And not to the N.U.J.

When Byron, Burns and Browning sang  
They did it all alone:  
The minstrel now must join a gang,  
And may not choose his own.

So be it. Let the T.U.C.  
All poesy disperse:  
And gradually, let there be  
A Ministry of Verse.

But if Apollo must give way  
To Someone in Whitehall,  
I think Parnassus may not play—  
We shall not sing at all.

Meanwhile, in this immense dispute,  
I fear to say my say,  
For I belong to the Institute  
And not to the N.U.J.

*October 22, 1944*

## IN DARKEST LONDON

The lights are up in Athens and in Rome:  
But Liberty does not begin at home.  
The Parthenon is free, and that is grand:  
But when will it be safe to cross the Strand?

*October 22, 1944*



## NINE YEARS

'Old and effete—this Parliament!' they cried,  
The laughing lads who stand about outside  
(Though now they ask the object of their mirth  
To mend the world and reconstruct the earth).  
But say, what other Parliament can claim  
'The more I lived the better I became'?  
Musso was master when it made its bow:  
But where is Signor Mussolini now?  
This is the Parliament that stood at bay  
With tyrant conquerors across the way.  
This is the Parliament that never ran,  
That worked in London with the working-man,  
And quietly continued in debate  
With bombs about or doodles at the gate;  
That never let the chosen leader down,  
Still gave him smiles when Fortune wore a frown;  
Knew how to nudge, but studied not to nag,  
And kept the cats discreetly in the bag.  
Maybe, had Hitler such a faithful friend,  
He would not be so very near the end.  
Say what you will for blemish or for blame,  
The Victory Parliament will be its name.

*October 29, 1944*

## BORED?

Bored with the war, Sir? Weary and worn and old?  
May be. But be thankful you spend your nights  
in a bed:  
You do not wake in a slit-trench, sodden and cold,  
Or keep a watch in the wind, with the Huns ahead.

Bored with the war, Sir? Can such a sigh be heard  
While Germans still are singing the same old  
strain,  
And our young boys are dying without a word?  
Bored with the war, Sir? No—you must think  
again.

*November 12, 1944*

## THE TORTURERS

I went to Breendonk, where the Belgians died;  
I saw the hanging and the shooting place;  
I heard the tales of torment—and of pride:  
I smelt the squalor of the Master Race.

I went to Aachen, and I walked with awe  
To see how Germany begins to pay:  
But all the crimes a single Breendonk saw  
A thousand Aachens will not wipe away.

*November 19, 1944*

## JUST THE SAME

‘What’ as the poet said, ‘is in a name?’  
Hitler or Himmler—hogs are just the same.

*November 19, 1944*

## FRANCE

The armies trudge and thunder,  
The news is fierce and fine:  
But here's the thing of wonder—  
*The French are on the Rhine!*

Now let the Prussians shiver,  
And well may bullies whine:  
For vengeance rides the River—  
*The French are on the Rhine!*

And here where no man doubted  
While England held the line,  
Let it be sung and shouted—  
*The French are on the Rhine!*

They spoke of France's fevers,  
Of women and of wine,  
But we were true believers—  
*And France is on the Rhine!*

Wherever men go under,  
And seek a hopeful sign,  
Tell them the tale of wonder—  
*The French are on the Rhine!*

*November 26, 1944*

## TO A CABINET MINISTER

Good fortune, Sir. Your grip expands.  
Another nettle in your hands!  
May England, unlike other lands,  
Build solid castles on her Sandys.

*November 26, 1944*

## LAST PARADE

*(Home Guard)*

Fall in, old friends—and then dismiss.  
You never thought to part like this.  
So long the bugle and the gun,  
But not one chance to hit the Hun.  
And yet, God knows, you've done your due;  
Montgomery was based on you:  
And when Montgomery went in  
You were remembered in Berlin.

Fall in, old friends. We shan't forget  
The cheapest army mustered yet:  
And let us give your women thanks  
Whose homes we robbed to fill your ranks.  
You stood before—they stood behind,  
To keep the Darkness from mankind.  
You took up arms to save the sun.  
Old friends, dismiss. The job is done.

*December 3, 1944*

## ‘POOR OLD BRITAIN’

Nobody's wrong but England—and England's  
always wrong,  
Too late—or else too early—too soft—or else too  
strong.  
And when for once the wide world begins to  
praise her name  
Her own sons crowd and hurry to shout her back  
to shame.

Remember how they begged her to carry arms to  
Spain?  
But carry arms to Athens? Oh, no, she's wrong  
again!  
We mustn't blame the Russians; the Yanks can do  
no wrong:  
I do not think the Germans will be guilty very  
long.  
Not Bismarck now but Baldwin is the architect of  
war;  
Wilhelm—and Woodrow Wilson—are not  
mentioned any more.  
But Britain, poor old Britain, is anybody's meat.  
Give her the hardest marches, and then trip up  
her feet.  
Stand bravely on the touch-line and analyse her  
acts.  
Bombard her with your sermons—and never mind  
the facts.  
Laugh loud at every failure, lay claim to each  
success,  
And make a party profit out of the cosmic mess.  
Nor ever cease to whistle your happy little song  
'Nobody's wrong but England—and England's  
always wrong.'

*December 10, 1944*

## LET OTHERS MOVE

Come over, Sirs. London would like to know  
Her Uncle Franklin and her Uncle Joe:  
And it might move the Germans even more  
To see the Big Three barking at the door.

*December 17, 1944*

## ‘UNREASONABLE’

‘Unreasonable’ Poles, why do you falter?  
Be sensible—be realistic, pray.  
Yours are the only frontiers that must alter:  
You are the one crusader in the way.

Unreasonable Poles, you will be fatter:  
Things of the spirit are not your concern.  
Oxford and Cambridge do not greatly matter:  
And you shall have Lough Swilly in return.

Unreasonable Poles, preserve tradition.  
In just two centuries, you must allow,  
You’ve thrice enjoyed benevolent partition.  
For Heaven’s sake, why start to argue now?

*December 17, 1944*

## CHRISTMAS CARDS

### *1.—For Downing Street*

We do not think that everything is well,  
But we do know the obstacles are large;  
So we are worried by the men who yell,  
But follow quietly the men in charge.

*December 24, 1944*

### *2.—For a Man in Trafalgar Square*

'Hands off Greece!' The British must get out.  
Oh, yes? And Hands off Belgium, too, no doubt.  
We shall, of course, be better for your sermons:  
But why not save some censure for the Germans?

*December 24, 1944*

### *3.—For Whom it May Concern*

Cheer up. We never thought that Peace  
Would all be song and dance.  
And what is happening in Greece  
Might have occurred in France.

*December 24, 1944*

## VINTAGE YEAR

You were a vintage year, proud '44—  
The grapes of Teheran—Paris and Rome—  
The conquered ocean and the captured shore—  
Robbers in rout, and half the harvest home.

A vintage year. The courage and the craft—  
The toil, the terror—the Mulberries, the Rhine—  
A teasing, generous, full-blooded draught!  
The dregs were difficult. But what a wine!

*December 31, 1944*

## LAST WICKET

Yes, Mr. Long-stop, it's a tiresome stand:  
But on the score-board, look, the end is plain.  
So kindly hide your yawns behind your hand:  
Or, better still, get on your toes again.

*December 31, 1944*

## OBVIOUSLY

[*'The Fuehrer takes the war more seriously than  
any other statesman.'*]

Thus Goebbels in his Weekly Letter.  
The answer is, of course: 'He'd better.'

*December 31, 1944*

## THE FERRYMAN

*(In Memoriam—Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay)*

I made a ferry through the foam—  
Dunkirk and Deal—Dieppe and Dover:  
I brought the flower of Britain home  
And took the fruits of freedom over.

*January 7, 1945*



## LLORD GEORGE

So David to Goliath's lair  
Goes peaceably at last!  
The hound is welcomed by the hare,  
And perished is the past.

Thus doth our ever-kindly race  
March on to brotherhood:  
So great a man, so fine a place  
Must do each other good.

Hang up the slings and rusty swords  
Against the peers employed,  
Now we have seen the House of Lords  
Become the House of Lloyd.

*January 7, 1945*

## THE FIGHTING CORPSE

Rundstedt is 'old and sick', the prisoners tell:  
So let us hope he's never young and well.

*January 7, 1945*

## COME OFF IT!

(To the German people we . . . should say: . . . We are  
not your judges . . .—*Sir Stafford Cripps*)

If we're not judges of the Huns  
Why do we shoot at them with guns?  
I think the fellows in the fight  
Are judging them—and judging right.

*January 7, 1945*

## THE YELLERS

You yell at everything; you yell and yell:  
You would be horrified if all went well.  
You yelled at Papandreou, worthy man,  
A Socialist, a sound Republican.  
Poor Papandreou might have won the crowd;  
But he was finished—for you yelled too loud.  
'Out of the frying-pan . . .' you yell, and pass  
From Papandreou to a Plastiras.  
And now, no doubt, you'll yell and yell again:  
Or could you, could you, just for once, refrain?  
It is not feasible—it is not fair—  
To govern Athens from Trafalgar Square.  
Your heart is huge, your intellect is large:  
But then, you see, we've other men in charge.  
And do not shed false tears for fighting Greece:  
The last thing you are looking for is peace.  
You are delighted. It would suit your game  
If every land in Europe was the same.  
What matters misery in Greece or Rome  
If you can make some mischief here at home?

*January 14, 1945*

## TOO SOON

Go slow, good planner. Do not shout too soon.  
The soldiers perish, and the Hitlers live.  
But you teach all of us a single tune:  
'What shall I get?'—and not 'What can I give?'

*January 14, 1945*

## HERE—AND THERE

We freeze, we sneeze—we're bronchial and low:  
But let's remember the soldier in the snow.

*January 14, 1945*

## WORDS . . .

'Words, idle words!' The foolish fellows cry,  
Laughing at liberties for which men die.  
So many words, they say—so little done;  
Yet in this manner we have done the Hun.

And look at Greece, and her unhappy fate  
Since she forgot the habit of debate!  
Laugh not at Parliaments. For Time records  
This is the way to take the 'S' from Swords.

*January 21, 1945*

## 'JETSAM'

*(In Memoriam—Malcolm McEachern)*

If there are songs in Heaven, as they say,  
How happy is the angel host to-day—  
To hear that voice like laughing thunder roll  
And share the music of a sunny soul.

*January 21, 1945*

## LINES TO A BIG CHAP

On, on, Steam-Roller! Give 'em Hell!  
But please don't crush our friends as well.  
*January 21, 1945*

## EAST PRUSSIA

*(A Marching Song)*

Plod on, poor frozen Fritzes,  
Plod on, poor frozen frau:  
You who invented blitzes  
Are in the business now.

Your Ribbentrops, your Papens  
Gave you to understand,  
War is a thing that happens  
On other people's land.

But Ribbentrop's in hiding,  
And Papen can't be found,  
And Russian tanks are riding  
In Goering's hunting-ground.

Plod on, corrupted cattle;  
The Junker plods with you;  
And Bismarck, Boss of Battle,  
Is farther down the queue.

Sing 'Heil!' to mighty Russia,  
'Farewell' to farm and shack:  
This is the end of Prussia,  
And you're not coming back.

*January 28, 1945*

## GREECE

*(To certain critics)*

At last, in spite of you, the picture's plain:  
At last the world knows where to look for 'lies'.  
Why don't you take Trafalgar Square again,  
Summon the people—and apologize?  
*January 28, 1945*

## THREE MUSKETEERS

God bless those mighty brains,  
The brilliant and the brave,  
That bear a planet's pains  
And dig the devil's grave!

They faltered not nor fell,  
Companions strong and sweet;  
And may they share as well  
The jobs of Civvy Street!

*February 4, 1945*

## THE FIRST BADGE

Three years Good Conduct, Wren?  
We raise our happy hat:  
For even sailor men  
Are rather proud of that.

But you are not so tough;  
You were not made for drill:  
A year is long enough,  
And three is longer still.

And you, so sweet and pretty,  
And very full of fun,  
Alone in this big city!  
Good Conduct Badge? Well done.

*February 4, 1945*

### ‘R.E.’

Salute the sappers, all you fighting men;  
All you great guns and tanks and lorries, bow!  
Bow down, bazooka, bayonet and Bren.  
Without the sapper, where would you be now?

The bridge is broken, mines are in the hay.  
A thousand deaths are hidden in the grass.  
But here's the sapper—he will find a way:  
And, you great guns, salute them as they pass.

*February 11, 1945*

## CAPITAL C'S

From Canada to Caen the toughest fighters came,  
And on from Caen to Calais carried liberty and  
flame:

They fought across the Causeways, they battled on  
to Cleves;

And all the friends of Courage salute the Maple-  
leaves.

*February 18, 1945*

## DISCOVERY

At last the happy truth is out—  
Port-wine is *not* the cause of gout.  
Far more responsible for pain  
Are kidney, liver, sweetbread, brain.  
The clubman should, by any means,  
Avoid anchovies and sardines:  
And citizens of every sort  
Owe some apology to port.

*February 18, 1945*

## 'UNCONDITIONAL'

Why should the foe complain about his end  
If this is how we amputate a friend?  
No more let 'Munich' be a name to vex:  
At least, for that, we did not blame the Czechs.

*February 18, 1945*

## RED ARMY DAY

Red soldier, still we cannot believe the things we see:  
It is five hundred leagues from Stalingrad to Spree!  
And you, the 'ragged rabble' that could not hope  
to win,  
Have fought with faith and fury from Moscow to  
Berlin.  
Not only now in Moscow the guns of honour roll:  
All the wide world is firing a salvo from the soul.

*February 25, 1945*

## LITTLE SHIPS

The big ships are short—and the big ships are  
busy:  
A continent is hungry and the high hopes fail.  
But here's Mr. Waterman, here's the little Lizzie,  
Lying in the river and sighing for a sail.  
Bring out the barges, get the tugs together,  
Bring the old Sky Lark and the Sarah Jane:  
Give them an Admiral—pray for Winston's  
weather—  
And make a mighty fleet of the little ships again.

*February 25, 1945*



## ‘SOME RUMP’

This ten-year Parliament that sprang, they say,  
From far-off causes and a different day,  
This jaded, old, unrepresenting ‘rump’,  
That has no destination but the dump:  
That votes itself alive, no man knows why,  
For it can claim no mandate but to die;  
Yet is commanded (and does what it can)  
To plan the planet and re-model Man!  
Well, you have seen this old assembly burn  
With lofty argument and deep concern,  
And speak with strength, but rally with restraint  
In fights and fixes that would vex a saint;  
And stand for England, critical but true,  
In troubles tougher than our fathers knew.  
And is it now less busy, bold or sage?  
Indeed, I fancy it improves with age.  
For, citizen, remember, if you will,  
You are the father, and inspire it still.  
If it’s a ‘rump’ that thus adorns the scene,  
How very fine the body must have been!

*March 4, 1945*

## ‘L. G.’

Greatest of Davids, on St. David’s Day,  
We all are Jonathans, and look your way.

*March 4, 1945*

## WOMEN FOR WESTMINSTER

Send us more women, voter, to watch below Big Ben.  
More Rathbones, Tates, and Summerskills, more  
Megans should be heard.  
They work—they fight like tigers—they're tougher than  
the men;  
And (what is most remarkable) they never waste a  
word.

*March 11, 1945*

## DE GALL

*Mon Général*, you sing a testy tune.  
Go back to 1940, May and June.  
Did you hear then a single sneer or moan  
From this old land, abandoned and alone?

Not one, *mon Général*. We did our best  
To nurse the fighters and forget the rest.  
We're doing still our best for brotherhood;  
And, you should know, our best is pretty good.

*March 11, 1945*

## HITLERDAMMERUNG

Add one more crazy legend to the Niebelungenlied—  
Of Canada and Cockney rolling up the Siegfried Line.  
Sieg-gomery and Hodges in the Dragon's dearest lodges,  
And Connecticut and Kansas sieg-riding over Rhine.

*March 11, 1945*

## THE BRIDGE

There's always some new river in the way  
    (I like to think that rivers matter still).  
Always the bridge was broken yesterday;  
    And panting hosts are thwarted of their kill.

But patience, tank—stand back, you saucy jeeps!  
    We have a wizard all the world must clap.  
Over the stream our Mr. Bailey leaps,  
    And leaves his monument on every map.  
*March 18, 1945*

## ST. PATRICK'S DAY

Honour the 'neutral' Irishman with weapons in  
    his hand—  
The men who made the Mulberries—the men who  
    hate the Huns.  
And you, St. Patrick, come again. Convert the lonely  
    land,  
And breathe into her statesmen the spirit of her sons.  
*March 18, 1945*

## W.L.A.

We called them 'Army', gave them 'uniform':  
They fought, to feed us, the dirt, the dark, the storm.  
And shall we now deny the soldiers' due?  
Oh, Oh, Britannia, this is not like you!  
They sowed their all, these ladies of the loam:  
Pray let them take some little harvest home.  
*March 18, 1945*

## MARCKX BROTHERS

Let us recall that every crazy creed  
Sprang from the same unpleasing Prussian breed.  
Bismarck and Marx—how similar the game!  
State over Citizen! What's in a name?  
The same sad decade saw these bores begin:  
And both were educated at Berlin.

*March 25, 1945*

## TECHNICAL HITCH

'I beg your pardon for the slight delay:  
In half-a-minute Mr. Smith will play.  
Meanwhile, here is a record I commend—  
Though it may have to stop before the end.'

O Lord, to what a bondage have we come!  
Not for a second may the Air be dumb.  
And men apologize with abject words  
If silence falls, and we can hear the birds.

*March 25, 1945*

## 'COME TO BRITAIN'

Argentina—Quebec—and Teheran:  
Valiant the voyage, and supreme the plan.  
Dumbarton Oaks, no doubt, and Bretton Woods,  
Will read the riddles and produce the goods.  
But would it be unseemly to remark,  
Such things *have* happened near St. James's Park?

*March 25, 1945*

## ‘LAST FORTRESS’

God help the fox who hopes to go to ground  
Where Monty hunts or Patton is the hound!

*April 1, 1945*

## ‘PAID OFF’

Haul down the flag, and put the guns ashore:  
Poor boat, they do not need you any more.  
But never mind. Here is the old burgee:  
Now you can have your lady-friends to tea.  
You shall be painted like a peace-time boat,  
And go to Oxford in your Oxford coat.  
You shall go cruising with the Sarah Jane,  
And take the family for rides again,  
And show your scars, and boast a bit, maybe:  
‘I was a warship in the King’s Navee.  
I saw old London River face the foe:  
I saw the devil come to town—and go.’

*April 1, 1945*

## SIGNAL TO THE PACIFIC

Good luck, Illustrious, and all the Fleet!  
England expects the usual from you:  
And while the Brown Beast dies upon his feet,  
You’ll give the yellow devil all his due!

*April 1, 1945*

## 'SOUTHERN COUNTIES'

No bangs at night? No terrors in the air?  
No neighbours dead—or buried—in the dawn?  
No quaking vigils underneath the stair?  
(Forgive us, Northern Counties, if you yawn.)  
It is five years since we were sure of sleep,  
Or dared to swear we'd see another day,  
Five years of fears and houses in a heap.  
This is a thing no other place can say.

*April 8, 1945*

## BROKEN GLASS

The house still stands: but Hitler has had five  
shots.  
The glass, the maddening glass, is everywhere.  
We still are gathering glass and forget-me-nots.  
We still are growing glass where the roses were.  
Each little piece I pluck from a flowerbed  
Is a piece of Hitler, soiling the English spring.  
For each I cry a curse on a German head,  
And when I remember Aachen—I laugh and  
sing.

*April 8, 1945*

## F. D. R.

*(In Memoriam)*

America, you miss a Man to-day,  
And we will be Chief Mourners, if we may.  
To-day, at least, his dearest wish is done,  
For all the English speakers think as one.  
But here's a wonder for the world to share,  
The calm Colossus in a cripple's chair,  
A suffering body with a single mind,  
To serve America and save mankind.  
Far off he saw the Devil on the way,  
And wore the name of Neutral with dismay:  
Could 'non-belligerent' more stoutly strive  
To keep the last lone combatant alive?  
This was the man who cried across the sea  
'Great Britain's word is good enough for me.'  
This was the man whose kindly ear would close  
To all the fretting whispers of our foes.  
Four times he faced the plotting and the polls:  
Four times he led a hundred million souls.  
Never in all the stories of the strong  
Did man command such multitudes so long.  
And when they bring him to the Golden Gate  
Where men like Washington and Lincoln wait,  
Of all the dead who served this little star  
Not many will not bow to F. D. R.

*April 15, 1945*

## TO A YOUNG MAN

Seneca—Solon—Cæsar or Cicero—  
Take any old and noble name you know,  
Denounce the dead, spray poison in the home—  
You still will not remind us much of Rome.

Fortunate youth, unfit for foreign shore,  
You can be bold in the uncivil war,  
And, free of E.P.T. and Party Truce,  
Monopolize the market in abuse.

Your craven fathers tried with all their might  
To spare your generation from the fight.  
But you're so fierce. You could not go to war:  
But you'd have sent your brothers years before.

You would have fought in '37 or '8,  
In '5 or '6, or any other date.  
It is a source of merriment to me—  
The battling publicists are all C3.

Write on, brave lad, and, while you may, attack  
An enemy who must not answer back.  
Those you assail will answer in the end,  
And those you serve cry, 'Save me from my friend'.

*April 22, 1945*



## HANDS ACROSS THE SPREE

How slow those arrows crept across the map,  
How many thousand weary miles apart!  
They swoop together with a thunderclap.  
Now draw one arrow more for Hitler's heart.

*April 29, 1945*

## BEAST OR BROTHER?

*(Buchenwald)*

Some call them 'bestial'; but that's unkind:  
There is no animal with such a mind.  
Some others say: 'They are my brothers still':  
I'll own no relative so quick to kill.  
Some are surprised—but why I do not know:  
This story started centuries ago.  
There is no need to seek another name:  
These men are 'germans', evermore the same.  
They'll frown on Hitler now, the fickle crew,  
Not for his deeds, but what he failed to do.

*April 29, 1945*

## BIG BEN

*('Our lantern was extinguished . . . '—The Speaker)*

'Extinguished?' No, Sir. Darkened for the fight,  
Blacked-out, bombarded, bullied night and day,  
The lamp of Parliament still kept alight  
To show the sad lost Continent the way.

*April 29, 1945*

## HYMN FOR VICTORY

*(Music by Roger Quilter)*

O Lord, Who saw us deep in shame  
From too much love of peace,  
Bless now our arms and honoured name,  
And let the conflict cease.  
When all was lost, except our soul,  
We were not slow to pray,  
And now the drums of triumph roll  
We give Thee thanks to-day.

We think no shame to love our land,  
The father of the free.  
We stood alone—erect we stand,  
And bow to none but Thee.  
But bless, O Lord, our fighting friends,  
With all the friends of Light,  
And where the bond of battle ends  
Make fast the bond of Right.

Help us to hold our thankless trust,  
To teach and toil for Man,  
To lead the peoples while we must,  
And free them when we can.  
Thus, when we face the final test,  
May we some mercy find;  
At least, we sought to serve the rest  
And conquered to be kind.

Bless, Lord, the men who fought the fight  
By sea and land and air,  
Bless all who battled for the Right  
But had no sword to bear.

Give comfort to the lonely heart,  
And to the sick, release,  
To us, the strength to play our part,  
And to our children, Peace.

*May 6, 1945*

## MR. CHURCHILL

Five years of toil and blood and tears and sweat;  
Five years of faith and prophecy and plan!  
He spoke our mind before our mind was set;  
He saw our deeds before our deeds began.  
He rode the hurricane as none did yet;  
Our Finest Hour revealed Our Finest Man.

*May 13, 1945*





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